

# Residential Development



Some housing in the area has deteriorated and building code enforcement inspectors routinely work in the area in response to substandard conditions and poor maintenance. Virtually all of the area is within the designated Hurt Park Conservation District.

Most of the residential dwellings in this area were built as single-family units between 1884 and 1924. Although housing construction thereafter has been sparse, since 1991 two multifamily buildings and 57 single-family units have been built. While, the most common housing style is the two-story American Four-square, there are a variety of architectural styles in the area, particularly in the H-2 District along Patterson Avenue.



Although a number of homes have been converted from single-family to multifamily housing units, the neighborhood still has a variety of single and two-family units.

While the older housing stock lends a sense of character and history to the neighborhood, it also requires greater care and maintenance with time. Declining maintenance and a lower rate of owner occupancy has contributed to a significant amount of blight and deterioration. This area has an above average number of both vacant lots and vacant housing units compared with overall city averages.

The area is primarily a renter-dominated market. There are over twice as many rental units as owner-occupied. However, in recent years the number of owner-occupied homes has remained relatively constant. Between the 1990 and 2000 Census, owner-occupied homes decreased from 36% to 32% of the total number of occupied dwellings.

The decline in the rate of owner occupancy combined with a slight decline in the number of single-family housing units shows that the trend toward more rental and multifamily properties continues. The decrease in overall owner occupancy is in large part due to the increase of multifamily units, which are by design usually rental units.



A major factor in the residential makeup of the area has been the conversion of single-family homes into multifamily structures. With the exception of the Hurt Park housing development and a few other small apartment buildings, the vast majority of the multifamily housing structures are from conversions of large single family dwellings rather than from new construction. The same holds true for duplexes in the area. Particularly in the neighborhood's core residential streets—Salem, Rorer, Patterson, and Chapman Avenues—there are few blocks that are comprised primarily of single-family housing, although the area originally was developed with single-family homes. Only 32% of the properties within the H-2 District are single-family units.

The newest substantial addition to the residential mix is Hubbell-Wyatt Commons, developed by Habitat for Humanity. The commons is a development of owner-occupied, single-family detached houses between the 1000 block of Norfolk

and Jackson Avenues. There are also five Habitat for Humanity single-family homes in the 1200 block of Cleveland Avenue.

Some residents voiced concern with the appearance and quality of the development, noting that the one-story homes are architecturally incompatible with the traditional homes of the neighborhood. This sentiment was shared with regards to other infill housing development, in addition to concerns about the general upkeep of property.

## Attracting New Homeowners



While the rate of owner-occupancy for single-family homes is fairly stable, the issue most frequently cited by residents throughout the planning process was the overall condition and appearance of the neighborhood. Residents stated that the appearance of the neighborhood could be improved if new homeowners moved in, and they voiced support for the creation and marketing of housing programs and strategies aimed to increase homeownership. Increased homeownership brings residual benefits, such as better maintenance of properties, improved aesthetics, economic stability and reduced crime.

Despite concerns about new housing design, residents voiced support for the construction of single-family homes in the neighborhood by organizations like Blue Ridge Housing and Habitat for Humanity, and also stated that the City should support such organizations.

Recently remodeled home on Campbell Avenue.



## Design of Infill Housing



The Hubbell-Wyatt Commons brought new homeowners to the area, however it is spatially and aesthetically disconnected from the rest of the neighborhood

Another recurring theme related to the appearance and character of the neighborhood is the concern of residents that new infill housing is often out of scale and character with the surrounding homes. Residents expressed concerns with the general character and quality of new development. The most frequently cited concerns pertained to inconsistent setback patterns (new housing being constructed further back from the street than the existing houses) and single-story houses being constructed on streets with mainly two-story homes.

The compatibility of new or converted multifamily dwellings in primarily single-family neighborhoods is also a citywide issue. Such dwellings should reflect the character of the existing neighborhood. Conversions of single-family structures to two-family dwellings should maintain the appearance of a single-family dwelling, especially avoiding changes to the front of the structure.

Residents voiced support for the implementation of the Neighborhood Design District (NDD) to protect the architectural integrity of the neighborhood. The NDD is a zoning overlay that regulates the appearance of new infill housing. The NDD should be established in the area in accord with the boundaries of the designated Hurt Park Conservation District.

## Diversity of Housing



Hurt Park Housing Development

A mixture of income levels helps create healthy, vibrant, and stable neighborhoods. Mixed incomes can be fostered by making a variety of housing options available, i.e. a mix of single-family and multifamily units. The area does have a variety of single-family, duplex and multifamily units. However, continued conversion of former single-family homes into apartments may threaten this balance and the stability of the neighborhood.

As single-family housing is more likely to be owner-occupied, maintaining a stable core of single-family units is essential to the long-term health of the area. Only 417 (32%) of the 1,291 housing units in Hurt Park, Mountain View and West End are single-family homes.

The permitted residential density of Hurt Park, Mountain View and West End needs to be examined further in the update of the City's zoning map, based on the neighborhood's future land use map.

## Housing Maintenance



Many houses are in poor condition, but offer good investment opportunities if rehabilitated. Many properties are eligible for rehabilitation incentives.

In the early 1990s the City launched NSEption (Neighborhood Stabilization & Enhancement Program) in the 800 - 1300 blocks of Campbell Avenue. It combined state and federal funds to provide low interest loans to property owners who rehabilitated substandard structures. Though the program was discontinued due to budget cuts, it resulted in noticeable improvements to several houses. Hurt Park is one of six neighborhoods now eligible for targeting of Community Development Block Grant Funds (CDBG).

Housing issues were the most frequently cited problems of residents, particularly the upkeep of property and the quality of landlords and tenants in rental properties. Many homes have fallen into disrepair or have become vacant. The City's building code enforcement inspectors have been very active in the area over the last decade. A total of 118 buildings were either condemned or razed between July 1992 and July 2001.

While recently the department began cross-training inspectors to cite all code violations on site—overgrown grass and weeds, inoperable vehicles and zoning violations—the core of the department's initiative in the area is still building maintenance. Inspectors administer the Rental Inspection Program, which ensures that rental housing units in the City's designated conservation and rehabilitation districts are maintained to code standards.

Many substandard buildings have either been razed or boarded up in the area. Despite persistent code enforcement efforts, problems continue with many properties. Many of the property maintenance issues that residents raised pertained to zoning violations, e.g., outdoor storage and grandfathered uses they deemed offensive. Many of these problems will not be easily alleviated. However, in the future, having cross-trained inspectors in the area and continuing the Rental Inspection Program will have a positive impact.